



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

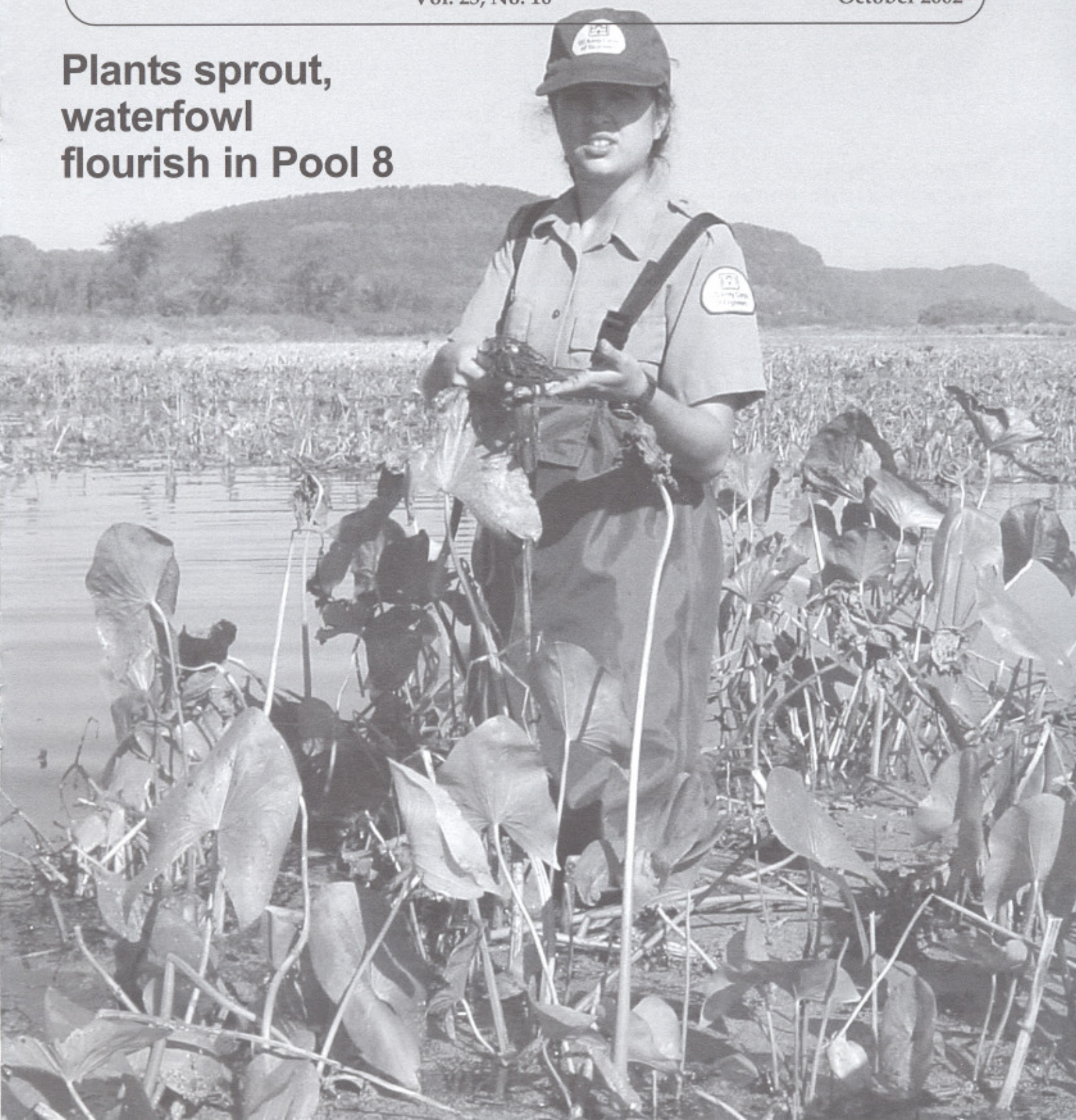
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 25, No. 10

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Plants sprout, waterfowl flourish in Pool 8



Performance teams map how we work, communicate

Two teams from the St. Paul District apply Army Performance Improvement Criteria to identify and map businesses processes and to improve communication strategies used by project delivery teams.

Team C maps processes, increases benchmarks

By Mark Koenig

APIC Team C had the task to identify and to map processes. I worked as team leader to support Joe Mose, project management; Bob Whiting, regulatory; Al Geisen, design branch; Maj. Will Greene,

contracting division; Jeff Pfannes, safety office; and Russell Arneson, internal review. Jim Mosner was the team champion, and Chuck Spitzack was the APIC steering committee member.

Our objectives were to increase the number of processes that have been mapped and increase the number of processes that have been benchmarked.

Process identification started with functional area team members working to identify their processes to operate as "One Corps, operating regionally and globally." Once identified, those processes need to be documented (mapped) and made available for use by all district employees to ensure uniformity in how the district conducts business.

For continual improvement, these processes then have to be evaluated against a benchmark to determine effectiveness and where improvements can be made.

To date, the following tasks have been undertaken to meet the team's objectives:

Task One: Implement a system for documenting processes and disseminating the information to the work force.

Meeting Task One: In November 2001, a recommendation that the district use the Oracle Tutor software for mapping was made to the APIC Committee.

After acceptance of the recommendation, the district purchased the software and required training on its use in March 2002. This software was chosen for compatibility with headquarters and other USACE offices undertaking similar efforts.

Task Two: Document specialists create document critical processes

using Oracle Tutor and provide completed documents to a document controller to upload to the district intranet.

Meeting Task Two: A web page titled "District QMP and Business Processes" has been created and a link to it can be found on the intranet home page.

An index of processes have been identified can be found at the web site. Once completed, this web site will include all of the districts critical processes necessary to operate as one Corps. The processes will be accessible to all employees.

Task Three: Establish metrics and benchmarking data to evaluate the documented processes.

Meeting Task Three: This step will begin after an individual process is loaded into the system and should occur on a scheduled basis. The district's undertaking of identifying, mapping and benchmarking processes critical to the organization is a considerable commitment. To be effective and worthwhile, the processes must be reviewed on an ongoing basis to determine if it adds value to the strategic objective of "One Corps, operating regionally and globally."

Team G fine-tunes communications

By Tim Bertschi

Team G had the following task: *"Improve effective internal and external communication strategies used by project delivery teams."*

The team, Lisa Hedin, Greg Yale, Tom Crump, Mike Dahlquist, Mark Nelson, Bruce Bolden, Mark Davidson and Tim Bertschi, developed and approved five tasks

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Crosscurrents

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Photo by Leigh Stuemke

Jon Sobiech, forestry technician at the natural resources office in LaCrescent, Minn., holds a seed pod of an American Lotus that emerged as a result of the drawdown at Pool 8.

Drawdown in Pool 8 re-charges plants, helps waterfowl

By Peter Verstegen

A lowered water level on the Mississippi River near La Crosse, Wis., this summer, gave plants a breather. The air and sun triggered growth in annuals and perennials on mud flats submerged by shallow backwaters since 1964.

"From the standpoint of habitat, we liked what we saw in the lower part of the pool this summer," said Jim Nissen, La Crosse, Wis., district manager of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, which includes pools 7 and 8. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the refuge operator, is a customer of the Corps.

What Nissen and other natural resource managers saw were shore

birds, wading birds and waterfowl using the re-emergent habitat.

The Corps cooperated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state agencies and others on the pool drawdown under the authority of the Upper Mississippi River Environmental Management Program.

"Arrowhead, nutgrass, rice cutgrass were the top producers for this year, along with annuals like millet and smartweed," said Leigh Stuemke, forestry technician at the Corps' natural resources office in LaCrescent, Minn.

This is the second drawdown for Pool 8. Spring floods and a dry summer shortened the 2001 project.

The lowered water level, called a drawdown, occurred in Pool 8 between June 17 and Sept. 16. The drawdown was most evident in the southern end of the pool.

The Corps operates 29 locks and dams from Upper St. Anthony Falls to Granite City, Ill. The locks form

pools of water, such as Pool 8, to aid navigation and recreation. Locks beside the dams allow passage of boats. During this three-month pilot project, anglers cast their lines, swimmers and campers relaxed on sandy islands and tow boats pushed tons of corn and soybeans through the pool – normal use even with a navigation pool 1.5 feet lower.

"The goal was to reach a target elevation of 625.8 at Lock and Dam 8 toward the end of June," said Gary Palesh, project manager. "This is 1.5 feet below the normal low-operating elevation of 630 feet."

"My general impression is emergent perennial plants that became established during the 2001 drawdown did very well this year," said Kevin Kenow, a resource biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in La Crosse.

The emergent plants provide new habitat for waterfowl, fish and other aquatic life. "Right now, fall migrants, such as ducks, geese and tundra swans, are heavily utilizing those areas," said Nissen. "Either they used them for loafing sites or improved feeding. We expect that to continue though the length of the fall migration. It is really gratifying to see. They really work those areas that were exposed."

The Corps began its drawdown when lock operators at Lock and Dam 8 at Genoa, Wis., opened the gates in mid-June. Three months later, they closed gates to refill the pool to reach regulation level by the end of September. It took around 10 days for the pool to return to normal prior to the fall waterfowl-hunting season.

Cover: Leigh Stuemke, forestry technician, examines the root structure of arrowhead, one of the emergent species in the Pool 8 drawdown. (Photo by Jon Sobiech)

Project partnering sparks safety training in East Grand Forks

By Ryan J. Otto

Despite chilly weather and swarms of mosquitoes, temperatures flared at the Corps' project site in East Grand Forks, Minn., the evening of Sept. 9.

That's when the East Grand Forks Fire Department held a fire training exercise at Green's Garden Center. The garden center was within the alignment of the phase 2 levees of the East Grand Forks flood control project, and many structures on the property had to be demolished in preparation for the upcoming construction.

The Corps of Engineers, the city of East Grand Forks and the demolition contractor, Clay Products, Inc., worked together to bring about a rare fire-training opportunity.

"An opportunity like this only happens once every three to four years, if we are lucky," said Fire Chief Frank Ringstad. "Being able to practice on a house this close to the



Digital video photos by Francis Schanilec

Firemen from the East Grand Forks fire department prepare to extinguish a fire during a training exercise in East Grand Forks, Minn.

city is a real treat for us."

Consisting of only 11 full-time and 18 on-call fireman, the extended department seldom has the opportunity to assemble as a company for formal training. The group worked together to learn practical experience in real-life fires they might have to fight.

The fire department planned a series of three exercises in one of the empty residential homes of the property. In one of the exercises, reminiscent of the movie *Backdraft*, flames climbed up the wall and spread horizontally along the ceiling. With just a quick, short burst of water from their

hoses, the fire shrank down to the corner of the room. If done properly, Ringstad said only 10-15 gallons of water are needed to put out a fire. Using short bursts of water allows the water particles to expand up to 1,500 times their original size due to the heat, in effect suffocating the fire.

To further enhance their learning experience, the exercises were recorded to evaluate the squad's performance and expand on the training benefits of the practical exercises.

The cooperative effort among the Corps, the city and the contractor boosted training and preparedness of local emergency responders.

The East Grand Forks fire department used a Corps video of the fire training exercise to support safety training and at a community open house Oct. 14.



Fire Chief Frank Ringstad (center) and other firefighters discuss with Ryan Otto, East Grand Forks resident office, methods and goals of a fire-training exercise.

Retirees gather at reunion in St. Paul Sept. 12



Ann Allen (left), Wayne Knott and his wife, LaVerne Knott, visit during the reunion in St. Paul. Knott, now with United Way, was master of ceremonies for the retirees' reunion. Allen retired from resource management and Knott as assistant planning chief.



Photos by Jon Lyman

Judy DesHarnais, deputy district engineer and chief, programs and project management, visits with George Fortune for the first time since his retirement Oct. 2001. Fortune worked in engineering division.



From left, Hall of Fame members and the year inducted are: Peter Fischer (1987); Lou Kowalski (1996); Dave Haumersen (1999); Keith Hauger, holding a photo of his wife and this year's inductee, the late Char Hauger; Jim Kursu (1995); Chuck Crist (2001); and Bob Post (1999). They were among the estimated 50 district personnel and retirees at the reunion. Fisher and Post were chiefs of engineering division. Kowalski and Crist served as district deputy engineer and chief, programs and project management division. Haumersen was chief of construction-operations division and Kursu was chief of program management division. For more on Hauger, see "Hauger inducted into Hall of Fame," page 8.

Dupey tracks emergency housing, debris missions in Texas floods

By Mark Davidson

The summer floods in Texas were very personal for Stephanie Dupey of Construction-Operations.

One of the areas in Texas that was flooded was Castroville, a town about 30 miles west of San Antonio.

"I have family and friends who live in Castroville, which made it also a personal issue with me, and I wanted to help them in any way I could."

Dupey was in San Antonio, Texas, from July 12-Aug. 30. It was the first time she had deployed to a flood fight. Dupey had worked in the district office emergency operations center during 2001 flooding in the St. Paul District.

"I spent the first three weeks that I was deployed working for the Emergency Support Function-3 team leader and the housing team from the New York District," said Dupey. "When I arrived at the disaster field office, personnel there were still working 12-hour shifts, seven days a week."

She tracked timesheets, money, costs, equipment, people and their whereabouts and provided directions for new people how to get around the building the emergency operations center was located in.

"I was stressed out a bit the first couple of days because I didn't know anyone. I had to figure out the routine and where to find the different offices, such as the property office, mailroom, security office, human resources and the many different FEMA offices," said Dupey. "The office building we were in was nice, but it was like a maze."

After the housing teamwork wound down, Dupey was assigned to the Corps debris team. "I worked for a FEMA debris specialist, and I entered hundreds of load tickets into a spreadsheet daily," said Dupey. "This spreadsheet included a breakup of the counties where cleanup was in progress, how many loads were picked up in a day, number of cubic yards each load contained and what type of debris it was."

Accuracy impacts pay outs

It was very important the load tickets be entered daily and accurately, said Dupey, because FEMA paid the county by cubic yards of debris hauled and by the type of debris. Burnable and non-burnable debris have different rates. For example, in one particular county FEMA paid \$12 per cubic yard for burnable-debris, and \$19 per cubic yard for non-burnable debris. Correct pay out depended on accurate data entry.

"I was also the Corps' point of contact that FEMA personnel came to with questions regarding lake levels of Canyon Lake and how many cubic feet per second of water was being released from the Canyon Lake Dam," said Dupey. "This was very important to those residents whose homes had already flooded once when water came

Floods, continued next page



Army Corps of Engineers photo

Stephanie Dupey and the emergency support function team worked housing and debris missions in San Antonio, Texas, from July 12 to Aug. 30. Left to right are: Gus Marinos, Galveston; Dupey, St. Paul; Robert Peters, Vicksburg; Michelle Clark, Galveston; and Jim Gilmore, Dallas.

Floods, continued from previous page
pouring over the spillway. I would get this information from the lake manager at the Corps Canyon Lake field office."

Dupey had a chance to get out into the field a couple of times and see the results of the flooding. "The most memorable sights were that of the Horseshoe Falls Estate area, where residents have built their homes along the Guadalupe River south of the Canyon Lake dam," said Dupey. "In this particular area, I saw a concrete slab where a house had been literally washed away with the flood waters. There were huge gorges where there had been land," she continued. "I couldn't believe that water could actually do that kind of damage."

Dupey attended a public meeting called by the Fort Worth District for the residents of Horseshoe Falls Estates. The objective was to update residents on the current flooding. This area had been previously flooded

"I saw a concrete slab where a house had been literally washed away with the flood waters..."

when water came running over the spillway in large amounts.

"The residents were angry and blamed the Corps for not releasing the water in smaller amounts and not informing them sooner," said Dupey. "Many of the residents had a chance to speak at the meeting and give their opinion on how they

thought it should have been handled and also they wanted the Corps to offer a buy-out of their homes, which the Corps didn't have authority to do. Many of the residents did not have flood insurance."

Dupey's relatives and friend's homes escaped damage from the flood. "The flood waters in Castroville came from the Medina River and did rise substantially coming within a foot of one of their homes, but then the water began to recede, what luck!" said Dupey. "Other than being evacuated twice from town and worrying themselves sick thinking they were going to lose everything they owned, they came out okay."

Communication, continued from Page 2
or action items for implementation. The focus was on improving those processes already in place.

A synopsis of the five tasks is:

Task One: Develop templates for quality control plans, to include risk assessment, communication plans and change management plans as required by engineer regulation 5-1-11, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Business Process, for planning, designing, constructing, and operations quality control plans.

The goal is to have more consistency in QCPs, making them a more usable and widely accepted tool.

Meeting Task One: This has been implemented in construction, design and planning, and operations QCPs should be implemented in the first quarter of fiscal 2003.

Task Two: Based on the risk assessment in QCPs, if there is the potential for delays or significant

impacts due to the action (or inaction) by higher commands, include division and headquarters as members of the delivery team.

Meeting Task Two: This process has been underway in the district for the last few months, and this task would formalize and bring emphasis to the need to include critical players at the division and headquarters level into district product delivery teams.

Task Three: During the feasibility study process, include a communication point with the local sponsor that identifies the alternative that will be fully developed.

Meeting Task Three: This is addressed informally in the planning and design process and has been successful on a number of projects. It will be formalized in the district's process-mapping efforts.

Task Four: Complete an inventory of existing operations

customer feedback forms used in navigation, recreation, environmental stewardship and flood damage reduction. Review authorities and develop standard processes for use, feedback evaluation and information management.

Meeting Task Four: Creating a standard process to evaluate and use the feedback will be completed in the first quarter of fiscal 2003.

Task Five: Develop guidance for implementation and use of the pre- and post-product interview form.

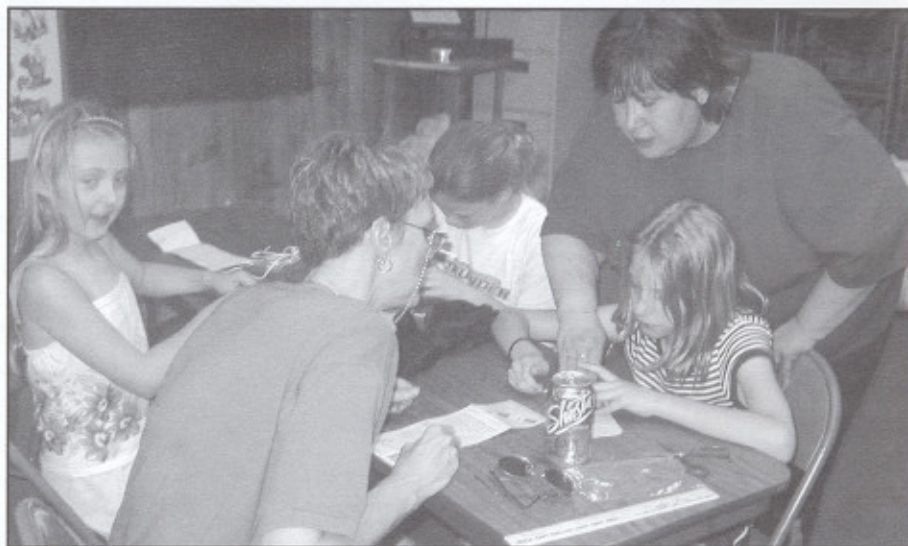
Meeting Task Five: A checklist to identify a customer's expectations prior to initiating a project and to measure customer satisfaction and expectations upon project completion were developed. Criteria for its use are in place and implementation is underway. The goal is to determine, at the start, the customers prioritized objectives and then systematically measure the district's success at meeting them.

Girl Scouts dedicate weekend to Native American crafts

Girl Scout troop 1502, led by Yvonne Berner from regulatory branch, dedicated June 7-9 to Native American crafts at the St. Paul District's Eau Galle campground in Spring Valley, Wis. Berner, who volunteers as troop leader, and Irene Stearns, park ranger, planned exercises in Native American crafts for the troop that weekend.

Fifteen girls and their parents camp out at Eau Galle each year. This is the troop's third year, and they plan to return to make it four. Berner's only requirement is that parent leave their cell phones, pagers, lap tops and busy schedules at home. "It is a weekend to get away to enjoy family and friends," said Berner. She has created getaway weekends not only for her troop and their parents but other organizations in the Apple Valley-Eagan, Minn., area.

The weekend included Native American crafts, bingo and snacks on Friday night. Saturday included a talent show produced by Troop 1502 and the rangers at the interpretative center.



Photos by Dave Berner

Yvonne Berner, standing, instructs members of Troop 1502 how to construct Native American crafts. Left to right are: Alyssa Anderson, Elizabeth McKie, Rachel Hanson and Sarah Smith.



Rangers Nic Evans, Al Zylstra and Irene Stearns assemble an eagle claw necklace with the Troop 1502. The troop and rangers offered interpretative presentations for all campers for Native American week.

Hauger inducted into Hall of Fame



Col. Robert Ball presented a posthumous award at the Retirees Reunion Sept. 11 honoring Char Hauger, an environmental protection specialist, who served the St. Paul District from 1976 until her death in 2001. Ball presented the award to Keith Hauger, her husband. During that time, through dedication, hard work and continuous self-development, she rose from

a GS-5 applications review specialist to acting chief, regulatory branch. Her legacy has inspired many employees to improve themselves through continuing education, determination and excellent performance. Her contributions include a computerized financial management system, as well as an optical disk imaging system that became a model for the Corps of Engineers. She has earned numerous awards, including the Commander's Award for Civilian Service and the Civil Servant of the Year.

Chief of Engineers commends nine

Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, chief of engineers, commended **James (Jim) H. Maybury, Jr.** and **Carol Johnson**, resource management; **Kristin Kosterman** and **Mary Chang**, information management; **Kevin Sommerland**, real estate; **Linda Wiley**, EEO; **Terry Zien**, engineering; **Delores Aldinger** and **Fred Mitchell**, contracting, with chief's coins at the town hall meeting Oct. 3. The coins recognize outstanding work.

Paulus honored with 'Just Did It' Award

Tim Paulus, design branch, received the "Just Did It" Award for his initiative and special effort in publishing a technical paper in the *Engineering and Construction Bulletin*. The paper discusses cost savings by the use of non-traditional metals in the lifting-chain design for tainter and roller gates. The approach results in low-maintenance, long-life chain system. Tom Sully nominated Paulus.

Prepare for rush hour in retirements

Prepare for rush hour in retirements. Retiree-eligibles can expect the exodus of retirements and other personnel actions to slow the administrative process.

"Employees ... need to submit their retirement applications to ABC-C [Army Benefits Center-Civilian] approximately 90 days before retirement day," wrote Daniel Clawson, director southwest civilian personnel operations center.

"We have entered into a period of years where the known retirement volume will be at least 6,500 to 7,000 per year," he said in a memo circulated through civilian personnel channels.

Effective Sept. 1, 2002, benefits center counselors will be available on line from 6 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday through Friday except holidays.

Benefits services are online at <https://www.abc.army.mil> through the Employee Benefit Information System.

Benefits services are also provided by the interactive voice response system, phone toll-free

1-877-army ctr (1-877-276-9287). For hearing impaired access, call 1-877-Army TDD (1-877-276-9833).

Muraski backsteps



Submitted photo

Mark Muraski, son of **Joe Yanta** in regulatory and **Mary Muraski** in real estate, participated in civil war re-enactors camp near Mankato, Minn., June 23-28. Muraski, closest to the camera and center, marched by file in the above photo. The 1863 and the Fort Union flags are in the background.



Photo by Tim Bertschi

Scott Tichy (right) accepts the Employee of the Month award from **Kevin Baumgard**.

Tichy named August Employee of the Month

Rich Schueneman, resource manager, nominated Park Ranger Scott Tichy for establishing the North Country National Scenic Trail at Lake Ashtabula, Valley City, N.D., for completion of trail segments and for his contributions in planning the National North Country Trail Association conference in August in Valley City. He led the effort to complete the first 12-mile segment last year and the second eight-mile segment this year. His work with state and local interests on the conference generated significant good will for the Corps of Engineers.

Tichy demonstrated leadership qualities in planning and executing completion of the trails and preparing them for a national conference. He demonstrated the trail's challenges by leading trail association and National Park Service officials on several hikes.

Raasch talks up Whitewater Park

Dave Raasch, project management, talked up the St. Paul District's Whitewater Park project to the Engineers' Society of St. Paul, Oct. 8. The luncheon presentation was in downtown St. Paul at the Buttery.

The project, sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, establishes a whitewater rapids channel, with a trail and park adjacent to the Corps of Engineers' Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam in Minneapolis. Construction is set for 2004, at a cost of \$15 million.

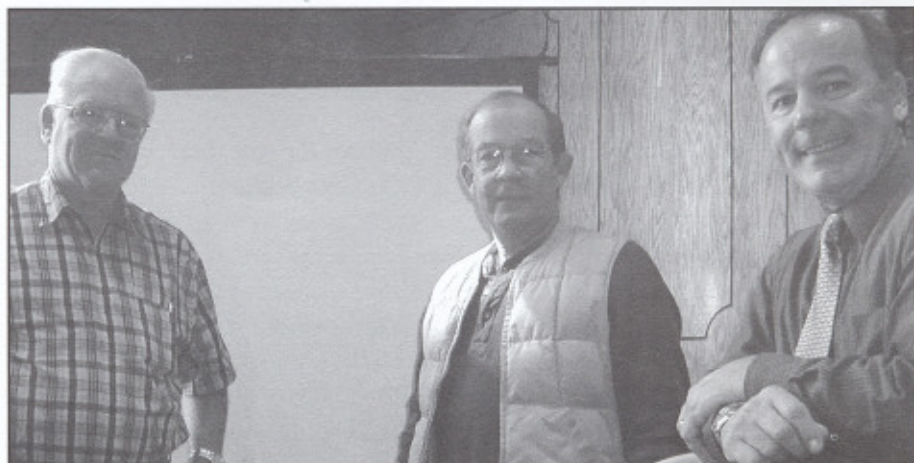
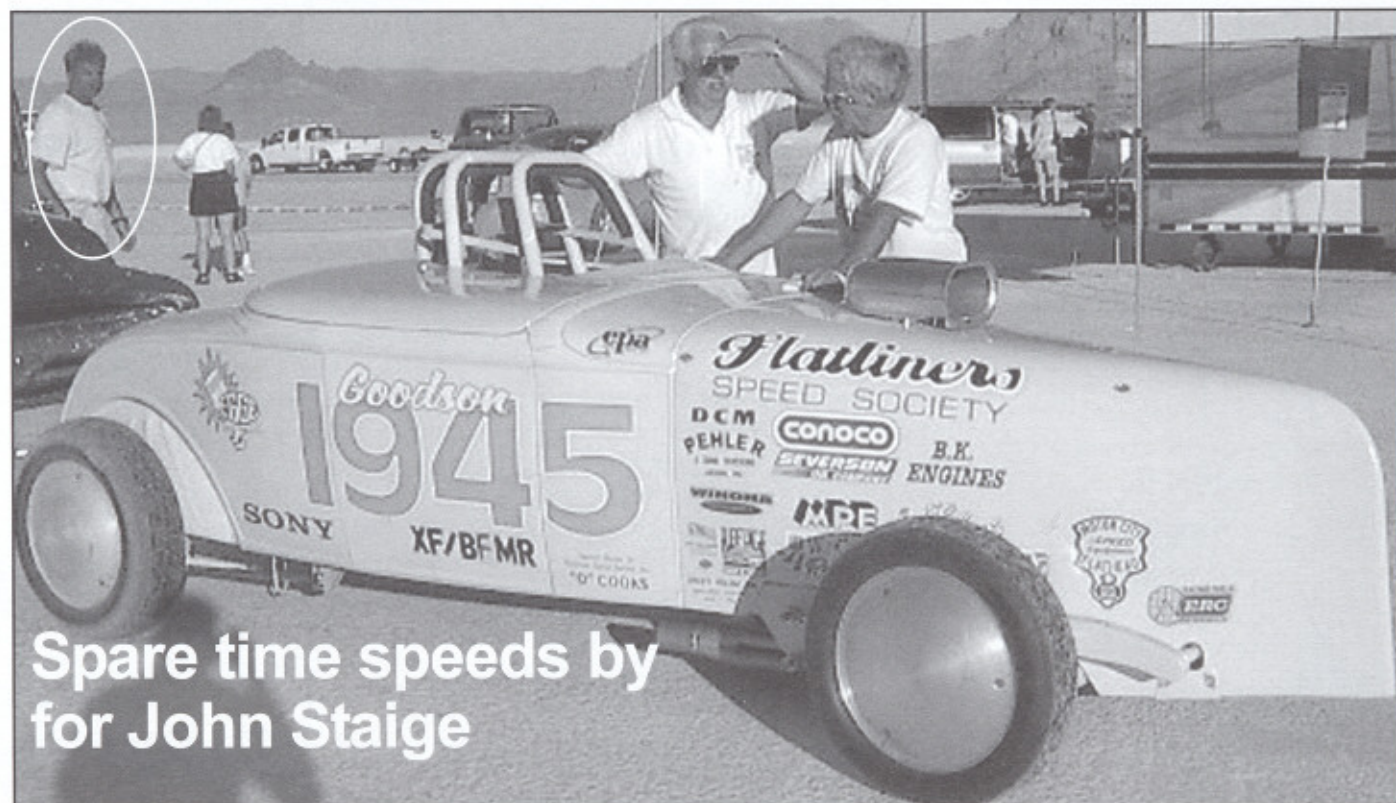


Photo by Peter Verstegen

Corps' retirees Jim Muegge, left, and Tom Heyerman, center, attended the meeting of the Engineers' Society of St. Paul in downtown St. Paul, Oct. 8, 2002. Dave Raasch, right, conducted a presentation about the Corps' design for the Whitewater Park in Minneapolis.



Submitted photo

John Staige (circled above) from maintenance and repair section in Fountain City, Wis., spent one week of his vacation in August as a crew member at the Bonneville salt flats in Utah during Speedweek 2002. The above racer is from the Winona, Minn., area and several area sponsors have their names on the car. "John tells me the racing team holds

three records," said Arne Thomsen, chief of maintenance and repair section. "The web site is www.scta-bni.org. Click on speedweek results, then click on Page 2 under Aug. 15. Click on the center picture in the sixth row," Thomsen continued. "It's a yellow racer with the number 1945 on it. John is in the yellow shirt standing next to his Ford pickup."